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NAPOLEON'S

DYING SOLILOQUY,

AND

Other Poems.

BY THOMAS STEWART.

L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers.—J. J. ROUSSEAU.

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MDCCCXXXIV.

PREFACE.

No accurate estimate of the character of Napoleon has been attempted to have been formed in the subsequent Poem. It is the position of the fallen and fettered monarch, like that of Prometheus in the tragedy of Æschylus, that has been embodied with sentiment, by the imagination of the poet. Sublime, although may be the idea of the personification of the son of Iäpetus and Clymene, that Lucifer of Grecian fable, glorying in his mighty deeds, while writhing under the wrath of an avenging Jove; yet not less grand were the representation of Napoleon, (if depicted by abler hands than mine) pourtrayed as prouder than the son of the Titans; disdaining to give vent to his sufferings; whilst he expires an exile, abandoned, the Ariadne of his empires, on a desert isle.—Behind him his glory should

tower like a pyramid; so lofty that even those who saw it reared, could hardly follow with their eyes the progress of the rising pile. Hurled down from its pinnacle, to beneath the base of the fabric he himself had built, lies this first-born of Cybele's race. He has been blasted by the fires of Heaven, yet upward turns a gaze of proud defiance upon the hand that smote him. He confesses his glorious guilt; revolts from penitence; and scoffs at pardon. He contemplates futurity with awe, yet not with fear. He gazes upon death with steadfast eye; dwells upon its horrors, yet shrinks not from them; then calmly bares his intrepid bosom to the inevitable dart.

He is depicted as expiring friendless; for although the object of the tenderest regard, and most anxious solicitude on the part of others, he feels not that reciprocity of affection, without which friendship cannot exist. For let it be remembered, there are minds of so highly refined a temperament, that they are doomed, in their painful pre-eminence, to soar far beyond all human sympathy. There are men, whose genius

is too expansive to be confined within those narrow and social limits, by which ordinary passions and interests are blended and bounded in the common tenor of existence. Excluded, as great talent must almost always be, from all communion of feeling, it recoils upon itself, and is compelled to create some ideal object, on which it may expend its energies, repose its affections; whereon it may expatiate, wherewith it may combine. Such is the hypothesis, whereby I should be tempted to explain the formation of the universe. Such, although in an infinitely lower degree, is the solution of all the problems of human ambition. Napoleon must have been either the friend or the rival, had they been his contemporaries, of Alexander, Sylla, Cæsar, or of Constantine. The union of any two such minds would probably have effected the total extinction of the liberties of mankind, while their collision must have convulsed the world. But Napoleon knew no equal, and consequently could have no friend.

All allusion to the empress, or to the offspring

of the expiring hero, has been purposely avoided in the following soliloquy. Conjugal, or even paternal tenderness, are seldom feelings predominant in the breasts of those who have expended existence on the stern pursuits of philosophy or ambition. It is in the common tenor of life that those amiable weaknesses usurp, and in some measure supply the place of exalted virtues. Nor is the absence of such passions from the deathbed of Napoleon improbable, or at least without precedent. Plato has represented Socrates as mentioning, only to desire the removal of Xantippe and her son from his dying presence.

It is probable, that, when the gradual approach of death allows of some space for reflection, the bias which has inclined our minds in the game of life, will yet direct their energies during the last struggles of existence. Yet some casual obstacle may obstruct its progress, and the ball may diverge from its common centre. Whatever then might have been the passion that still reigned in the breast of Napoleon at the hour of his decease; or whatever the moralist may wish

that it should have been; the poet is not restrained by any improbability from imagining the strongest passion to have been revenge. And only within the limits of probability, is poetry, which personifies either character, action, or passion, imperatively confined. Let, therefore, the expiring warrior anticipate the lapse of years; the judgment of heaven; and the vengeance of mankind. Let him behold the nations aroused from the torpor of their ignominious sloth. Let him behold the sceptre wrenched from the effeminate grasp of enervated despotism: exulting that his chains shall be fast rivetted upon his oppressors; or cast as a legitimate inheritance upon their proscribed and unpitied race.

Audiam; et hæc manes veniet mihi fama sub imos.

If, alas! he cannot be pourtrayed as sympathising with those who, struggling for freedom, advocate the proudest rights of reason, and consequently the most noble and inalienable possessions of mankind; still, however, he cannot be, for a moment, imagined to have entertained any other feelings than those of contempt for the im-

becility of puny despotism. His absolute empire was effected by gigantic conquest; and sustained by fascinating glory: while the dominion of most of those monarchs who preceded him, and whose sway has survived him, originated in the barbarous ignorance, and is maintained by the brutal degradation, of mankind.

In order to complete the elucidation of the following Poem, it only remains that some few observations should be subjoined with regard to the religion of Napoleon. Unhappily for the interests of truth, hypocrisy may always be tendered to the world instead of its prototype; and will readily be accepted as a legal payment, and perhaps may often pass as the most current coin.—It becomes therefore difficult, although necessary, to distinguish the profession of a faith grounded on motives of policy, from a superficial conviction of its truth, which puts the believer's sincerity to no very trying test. Napoleon professed himself to be a Christian; he re-established Christianity in his dominions, and called upon its ministers to ratify, and sanction by their authority and their

presence, several of the most important actions of his life. For whatever might have been his philosophy, it was sacrificed at the shrine of power. Frederick II. of Prussia, would, most probably, never have legally recalled the worship of the true faith, had he found it, like Napoleon, banished from his empire; disregarded by the mass of the nation; scoffed at by the ribaldry of the mob; neglected by the indifference of the great; while it was scorned and undermined by the crude opinions of an overwhelming majority of those who enjoyed the reputation of learning and talent. Yet, when such was the state of feeling that pervaded his empire, the victor of Marengo offered incense on the altars of Christ. St. Genevieve was reinstated as the protectress of her country, in the temples of the capital; while St. Napoleon was, with surreptitious piety, introduced into the calendar. But it is implicitly to be believed, that the reception of the saint in heaven was more flattering than that of his religion upon earth. Yet, however God may have been supposed to have directed the policy which pandered his sanctuary to the

ambition of a conqueror; France was but little flattered by the condescension; and while, for her greater edification, the catalogue of her saints was augmented, it is to be feared that the number of their votaries was decreased.

It can hardly be supposed that Napoleon could have formed so erroneous an estimate of public opinion, as to have believed that in France the re-establishment of the Catholic faith could have promoted the consolidation of his empire. Yet when aiming at European dominion, he was aware that in every country, excepting his own polished land, superstition might play a powerful if not a becoming part. He respected, nay even adorned the shrine of Borromeo at Milan: although he imprisoned, and is accused of having greatly insulted God's earthly vicegerent at Fontainbleau. Hypocrisy can alone explain and reconcile actions so contradictory, and conduct so anomalous. I am, therefore, forced to conclude (however fervently the truth of my conclusion is to be deprecated), that the practical tenor of Napoleon's life is that of an apparent infidel. Yet

such were his talents, that surely his incredulity must obtain (however unavailing it may be) the excuse of having sprung from philosophical principle, and of having been established on deliberate conviction.

Let it not be imagined that this opinion has been hazarded in order to blast the reputation of the glorious dead. It is enjoined upon Christians, in the sacred volume, not to judge, lest they should be judged. I condemn none for their creed, nor for their scepticism; and only claim that indulgence for myself, which I so willingly concede to others. It were desirable that this sentiment were universal; and, in a country where personal freedom is so highly prized, has been so dearly acquired, and is so courageously maintained, that the trammels which fetter the understanding should at length be rent asunder; and that Britons, while they have provided so abundantly for the liberty of their bodies, should not be liable to the accusation of having overlooked the slavery of their minds.

When another generation shall have succeeded

to the present, an historian may perchance arise, who may be able to estimate with accuracy, and to delineate with fidelity the character of Napoleon. Yet the task will be difficult, whatever be the hands into which it may fall. Master of the language in which he writes; possessed of patient research and accurate discrimination; the historian of this eventful period will still find it a trying undertaking, to judge with candour of actions, which have been misrepresented by party-spirit, exaggerated by the ignorance of some, and diminished by the jealous incredulity of others. Let him remember, that in historical composition every epithet must be carefully weighed, every fact must be fully substantiated; whilst every action must be exhibited in its proper position, and with its suitable light. Let him beware of pourtraying dramatic sketches of character; of instituting inappropriate comparisons; or of being betrayed into falsehood by heightening the colours of a contrast. The last of these insidious errors has been fatal to the reputation of many historians, and has crept even into the writings of Vol-

taire. Such an author must soar superior to the baneful influence of opinion, prejudice, and power. If he aspire to being believed by others, let him begin by being himself incredulous: remembering with Cicero and Epicharmus,

Νᾶφε καὶ μεμνασ' ἀπιστεῖν,
ἄρθρα ταῦτα τῶν φρενῶν.

He must rise with the hero whom he describes. But above all things, let him beware of reducing to any standard, on which he may himself have fixed, the actions of a man whose fame filled the world; whose glory dazzled, whose urbanity conciliated, and at length captivated the nations which he vanquished; while it exalted, softened, and subdued his own.

Naples, April 22, 1833.

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NAPOLEON'S DYING SOLILOQUY.

Tecum Philippos, et celerem fugam
Sensi, relicta non bene parmula.

HORAT.

NAPOLEON'S

DYING SOLILOQUY.

I.

Day sinks; yon Sun, now all but set,
Pauses o'er the level wave,
And ere he plunges, proudly yet
Gilds the darkness of his grave.

But shall I set, like him, to rise,
And stride again those azure skies?
Or frowns, upon my vacant sight,
A starless, an eternal night?

The buoyant sail, that glory bore
Along, with empire's flag unfurl'd,
Lies dash'd against a barren shore,
By tempest that convulsed the world.

II.

Though once, from Douro to the Don,
Insatiate conquest urged me on,
Till, casting Europe far behind,
All Asia grasp'd my craving mind;
Then writh'd within the world confin'd,
  Like Philip's godlike son:
Now mark me on this narrow strand,
Forlorn, the Ariadne of my empires stand,
  Abandon'd and undone.

III.

But more than king, though reft of power,
  Still flashes from this wither'd frame;
Proud as in its meridian hour,
  A soul not Death himself can tame.

Unbent, as though by kings obey'd,
This hand Cybele's sceptre sway'd,
Or thund'ring brandish'd Vict'ry's blade.

IV.

Hopeless—for hope allures not him,
  Who once call'd half the world his own;
The gems of common crowns grew dim
  Before the footstool of that throne.

Fearless—forsooth have I to fear?
Is this not hell? or am the first
That back on heav'n has hurl'd its sneer;
And cursing has expired accurst?

V.

Come, Death! too often we have met,
That I should fear thee, or forget
Thy life-devouring gaze;
Thy 'count I've balanc'd; 'tis the debt
That nature justly pays:
My seal upon the bond is set;
For thee our reckoning stays.

VI.

But art thou he, whose regal shape
So well could glory's image ape
Upon the battle-field?
I saw not then so ghastly leer
The fleshless, hollow, fiend-like sneer,
Thy gaze has now reveal'd:
I knew thee, when from my career
Reflected rays made thee appear
Some demi-god conceal'd.

For then adorn'd, thy skulking mien
Lied, in dazzling mask array'd:
Now scowling, monstrous, and obscene,
Thy naked horrors frown display'd.

VII.

Lifts up her voice the rav'nous grave;
Her portals yawn, she cries aloud,
" Behold the guerdon of the brave,
The crawling worm, and slimy shroud."
I hear thy summons, hence avaunt;
No more my 'parting spirit taunt,
I follow, fiend, away!
We meet at thy appointed haunt,
It is the destin'd day.

VIII.

'Tis not, fell tyrant, I would hide
Thy terrors from me, nor deride
My nature's awful doom:
Yet pant I like a burning bride
Expecting her bridegroom.
Though there the very worm shall be
Triumphant, and preferr'd to me,
Yet pant I for the tomb.

IX.

Then hence, prepare for thy repast;
Invite the worm, unfold its coil;
When gorg'd on me thy guest at last
Will yield thee up a second spoil.

X.

Thou canst no more: my spirit freed
Shall gazing back, behold thee feed,
Nor envy thee thy feast;
As freeborn slave in bondage bent,
That feels his galling fetters rent,
Exults to be releas'd.

XI.

For Fate could never uncompell'd
This spirit from her womb evoke;
While, from her hand, I deem withheld
The dark, annihilating stroke.

Her plastic power has but combin'd,
Can but degrade, or elevate:
Eternal as herself, the mind
Lives, and can only change its state.

Ev'n in this dying hour I feel
New energies within me rise;
That eloquent from death appeal—
Demand admission to the skies.

XII.

Why lurk thy terrors, Death? come now,
O'ershadow'd by sepulchral night;
Destruction low'ring from thy brow,
While fly before thee life and light.

Place here thy hand upon my heart—
Ebbs faster ev'n one pulse away?
Then own, all-conqueror as thou art,
That I at least have scorn'd thy sway.

XIII.

But wherefore am I? have I been
The sport of more than human power;
The pageant of a passing scene;
The tempest of a troubled hour?

As o'er the plains the torrent sweeps,
As winds bestride the bounding deeps;
My course was with the strong:
The furthest isle old Ocean keeps,
All-trembled as I rush'd along.

XIV.

Till, like an earthquake, I had riven
  The world, from Thule to the Nile—
If guilty—let me die unshriven,
  Nor penitence my lips defile.
By man, by God though unforgiven,
  Reviled will I in turn revile:
These lips were moulded but for scorn,
  And never meant to smile.

XV.

As stiller comes the calm again,
  When raging hurricane is o'er;
Now autumn dyes, with gold, the plain,
  That I had redden'd deep with gore;
The serf resumes his slavish strain,
  Where angry trumpets bay'd before,
And glorious peal'd the battle's godlike roar.

XVI.

What though, from clime to clime, my name
Outspeeding far the flight of Fame,
Borne on the wings of terror came?

Like Cæsar's now, an empty sound
Is all that of my power remains:
The lord of half the world lies bound
In slavery's insulting chains.

XVII.

Yet ah! what victors, that elate,
New Timours of their Bajazet,
Can mangle thus a prostrate foe:
Who fear me in my fall'n estate,
And dread the being they bestow.
For oft in their intemperate sleep,
They feel their flesh around them creep,
As grates my clanking chain;
Nor deem all yon Atlantic deep
My spirit can restrain.

XVIII.

If death have pangs, I hardly know,
But only feel his race is fleet:
O'ermantled had his pall, my woe;
Slept but my vengeance blood-replete.
He leaves my glory—but for fame
Suffice my laurels, 'neath their shade
See France reclining proudly claim
A warrior's rest, and sheathe her blade.

XIX.

France! at that sound, in Death's despite,
Revives again my wonted might,
That sluggish nature shakes:
I feel as erst I felt in fight;
The cannon's roar awakes;
Disperse around the hues of night,
The dawn of glory breaks.
My sword, my charger, on, away;
Why loiter all my slaves?
My charger, speed; yet none obey—
Is't then my fancy raves?

XX.

Pause, reason, pause one moment more,
And light me till I grasp the shore,
That bounds the gulf of time:
If life with all thy rays be dark,
Without thee who shall moor his bark
To yon benighted clime;
From whence no beacon shines:
Where wreck'd is all the sailor's art;
Where compass points not; where no chart
The fath'mless port defines;

Whereto impell'd by fatal gale
Is desperate driv'n the struggling sail,
No anchor can retain ;
Till swept within the whirlpool's verge,
'Tis 'whelm'd ; great God, shall it emerge
From that fell deep again ?

XXI.

Land of my love, shall back to thee,
No more to stray, my soul return ;
If, from its dark dominion free,
My spirit burst the narrow urn.

Land of my glory, ev'n in death,
For thee still bounds my fainting heart ;
While wafted on my latest breath,
Thy name and life at once shall part.

Land of my power, when thou wert mine,
I all but gave the world to thee :
Opposing elements combine ;
Fate wrests away the victory.

XXII.

And save yon hell that red arose
To mock me from Siberian snows,
Had earth beside avail'd my foes ?

Then had those puny slaves I crown'd,
Still at my footstool slinking round
Yet crouching kist my feet;
Nor those my very breath had made,
The Brutus had so vilely play'd,
Nor freedom grasped, but love repaid
By daggers?—no—deceit—

XXIII.

Oh! God, in this fair world of thine,
Why should the human heart alone,
Discordant from so great design,
Cry up in insult to thy throne?

If earth contain an empty name,
It surely must be that of friend;
From heav'n the blest idea came,
To find it, there we must ascend.

XXIV.

What are those vows, that once to me
By shouting tongues, were loudly sworn?
Speaks not the voice of Victory?
Are all a nation's trophies torn?

Those vows are broken; Vict'ry now
Has pluck'd her laurels from my brow.

That hair floats streaming on the wind,
Which once an hundred wreaths confin'd,—

While gazing o'er yon hostile deeps,
Back to its native realms again,
My soul on wings of fancy sweeps,
Till rous'd to drag its galling chain.

Nor gladder sound now greets my ear,
Than when the sea-bird's piercing cry
Proclaims the raging tempest near;
Exulting as he cleaves the sky.

XXV.

For ne'er upon this ear again,
Shall burst the trumpet's thrilling sound;
No more upon the tented plain,
This eye shall revelling roll around.

Oh! had I in the battle-field
Laid low my head upon my shield,
And sunk where ev'n the bravest yield!

For sure the warrior's softest grave
Is hollow'd in the gory ground:
Few tears are shed, but 'tis the brave,
Who seldom weep, stand mute around.

XXVI.

Yet better suits my darksome mood,
This stern and awful solitude;
Than gaze insulting should obtrude
Its pity on my parting sigh.
If after-ages shall inquire,
When faded from these lids their fire,
If I had learnt to die:
Ask it of those who saw me stand
Upon Marengo's plain, demand—
Ev'n let my foes reply.

XXVII.

And is it on the bed of death,
When faintly gasps my stifling breath,
That I shall lie to God, and crave
Life's taunting boon? no, not to save
A thousand lives, will bend the brave:
I die, nor ask the shelter of a grave.

And if my soul a hell await;
Eternal pangs, eternal fire:
I will not soothe, but curse the fate,
That blasts me in its horrid ire.

XXVIII.

Say, gods or demons, have I play'd
The lion's part, that fights ensnar'd ;
While ye, with scornful gaze, survey'd
The sport your bitter jest prepar'd.

Within my fix'd arena's bound,
I lash'd, I shook the trembling ground :
Nor mark'd what ramparts hemm'd me round.

While ye, unseen, from high beheld—
Now curb'd my rage, and now impell'd—
My fury on to madness drove,
Till singly with the world I strove ;
Despis'd a throne already won,
Undid what who? had else undone.

XXIX.

Up! up! I hear the trumpet sound ;
Awakes the world, oh! were I free,
Abandon'd on the reeking ground,
Expiring, but in liberty.

Wave only once, above my brow,
Gallia's banner, ere I die ;
Ev'n Death, receding, would allow
The boon that barb'rous foes deny.

Then spread that banner o'er my bier,
And let it be my only pall:
My banner, and the soldier's tear
Would lightly on my bosom fall.

XXX.

My sword—I leave it to the brave;
It shall not canker in my tomb;
While there is innocence to save,
While tyranny escapes her doom.

The deadly gift from high was giv'n,
Attemper'd in the rays of heav'n;
The sword of vengeance, and of fate:
By fate again 'tis from me riv'n;
Nor hand on earth is found to clasp
This blade within its fault'ring grasp.

XXXI.

It falls, but with it falls the pride
At once of millions by its side.

Though red were dyed its ruthless sway,
Yet dazzling glory hid the stain;
Whole empires, that had felt its sway,
Demanded back this blade again.

XXXII.

Behold the nations rise; anon
Europe reddens with their gore;
I see the lofty victor don
The mantle that my glory wore:
But let him, ere he gird it on,
Be all that I have been before.
Else let him not this mantle lift,
That, dread as Dejanira's gift,
May torture ere it smite:
Rememb'ring that, by Fate inspir'd,
Uprose I in this garb attir'd
By gods, in man's despite.

XXXIII.

Then shall I be aveng'd—of hell
This hope, a more than heav'n will make;
This dream will shades of death dispel,
And parching thirst of anguish slake.

Then backward turn'd again to earth,
My soul shall revel in that mirth,
The damned may enjoy;
For vengeance, though of heavenly birth,
Ev'n hell cannot destroy.

XXXIV.

But, mark! I vengeance ask alone;
My wrongs the mildest would resent.
I ask not torture, not a groan;
I could not ev'n a worm torment.
And can God torture? were not then
The Maker by his work excell'd?
Can what blasphemes not God, in men
Be up to execration held?

XXXV.

When man, whom nobler nature sways,
Disdains a prostrate victim, stays
His hand impell'd to smite.
Although a moment past, defied,
For life he with his rival vied;
And vengeance seem'd his right.
No more; the vanquish'd lies unharm'd;
Vict'ry, the victor has disarm'd;
The brave with equals fight.

XXXVI.

Then can God torture? and prepare
To grind an atom in his ire?
Gloat on the horrors of despair?
Can heav'n, from hell, new bliss acquire?

Can time, can crimes of worlds be weigh'd
With an eternity of woe?
Would not such vengeance God degrade;
While it absolv'd his wretched foe?

XXXVII.

Rise, injur'd God; to man restore
The torch of reason, and the grade
Creation granted him, before
Himself he blind and brutal made.

Rise, God, and rend the bonds of fate;
Thy world destroy, or renovate;
For fall'n 'tis from its first estate,
And now insults thy might.
Or if not fall'n, thou art not great;
And Darkness shares the throne of Light.

AN EPISTLE

FROM

ABELARD TO ELOISE.

Such, if there be, who loves so long, so well—
Let him our sad, our tender story tell.

POPE.

TO

ALEXANDER POPE.

If in those realms, where in Elysian rest
Immortals quaff the nectar of the blest,
Could human voice on thy once melting ear
Pour the faint music of this lower sphere ;
Then thou, the bard that bad'st me mounting sing
In placid skies where soar'd thy downy wing,
Should'st hear the notes of thy neglected praise
Ennobling shield these unbefriended lays.
But fled with thee is thy Augustan age,
Thy verse unsung, ev'n closed thy classic page :
Thy St. John sleeps ; thy Murray lives no more
To list to numbers he so lov'd before.
Less softly flows the silver Thames along,
Ah! lull'd not now by thy melodious song.
The Muses, homeless, haunt no more those caves
Where idly weep his once-exulting waves.
But thou, triumphant in thy flight sublime,
Hast swept beyond the narrow bounds of time.

This vaunted world, to thee how little now!
How vain the wreath that bound thy lofty brow!
What though insulting Envy's tainted breath
Would blight thy laurels on the shores of death;
The venom back upon himself recoils,
And 'snares the monster in his hateful toils.

If to these numbers some small praise belong,
'Tis that, attun'd to thy immortal song,
My ear has caught its echo from on high,
While wand'ring 'neath Ausonia's cloudless sky;
Where calmly rolls bright Arno's classic stream,
With murm'ring voice that lulls the poet's dream,
Where music floats on every perfum'd breeze
That show'rs down fragrance from the trembling trees;
While still, enamour'd of their myrtle bowers,
The wanton Graces chase the playful Hours;
Where Art from Nature half her empire stole,
To lure the eye, or lift the mounting soul:—
There, while I track'd anew thy course sublime,
My lips inhal'd the spirit of the clime.

ABELARD TO ELOISE.

Deceitful slumbered in my breast that flame
No time could conquer, and no tears could tame;
Till I, alas! the fatal page unseal'd,
That all thy love, lost Eloise, reveal'd.
Ere yet I trac'd the first delicious line,
I felt at once my glowing heart was thine;
By thee rekindled all my bosom burned;
Again my unrelenting pangs returned;
Thy ardent passion all my soul subdued,
My woe awakened, and my guilt renewed.
The bride of heaven, betrothed to love divine
(The victim thou, the sacrifice was mine),
I led thee lingering to thy lone abode,
To God repaying more than ev'n I owed:
To pass the tenor of thy peaceful days
In works of love, of penitence, of praise;
To weep those tears that consolation bring,
From placid sorrow that has lost its sting;

Forgiving me, thyself to be forgiv'n,
And taste on earth the happiness of heav'n.
Until at length into thy dying ear
Should angels whisper, calming every fear;
On high to God direct thy drooping eyes,
Till floods of light should waft thee to the skies;
With not a sigh to mark thy latest breath!
And still thy smile be eloquent in death!

Such was the dream that floated o'er my mind,
When I to God my Eloise resign'd,
No more the victim of forbidden love,
A saint aspiring to her home above.

Still lull'd by hope my fancy fires to see,
Her dreams of happiness awake on thee.
Before the cross I seem to see thee bend,
Adore thy God, and supplicate thy friend;
More beauteous melting in repentant tears,
Thy virtue heightened by thy guilt appears;
Thy burning anguish brightens every stain,
Thy crimes forgotten while thy woes remain.
Those eyes all streaming, and that bosom torn,
That once to love and Abelard were sworn:
No more with passion heaves that marble breast,
Each wish forsaken, each desire at rest:

Thy lips all tremble, yet no thrill of bliss
Has stol'n the sweetness of thy lover's kiss;
But parch'd and pale they move in silent prayer,
No glowing warmth, no quivering pulse is there.
Around the cross thy arms in anguish thrown,
Cling cold and lifeless to the sculptured stone;
Rests on thy Saviour's feet thy head reclined,
And pours out all thy soul to him resigned.
Such the fair saint imagination drew,
Such, Abelard would fondly fancy you.
And couldst thou guilty to thy God aspire,
To feed his altar with unhallowed fire?
To break the stillness of that calm retreat,
Where deep devotion holds her pensive seat;
There, all enraptured with thy love profane,
To pant with passion through each rising vein,
With sullied lips to join the sacred choir,
And melt in transports mortal lusts inspire?
When rais'd on high the vesper hymn ascends,
What time thy vestal train around thee bends,
Canst thou unmov'd the glad hosannas hear,
Or dies the music on thy lifeless ear?
Wakes not thy soul when peal'd thro' many an aisle
Loud organs shake the high-o'ershadowing pile,

Steals no soft tear-drop o'er thy glistening eye,—
Or lifts thy bosom no congenial sigh?
All cold and pale, what means thy mournful gaze,
That so impassive all the pomp surveys.
The lifeless languor of that patient woe,
That weeps not only for no tears will flow?
Alas! 'tis guilt the sad conclusion draws,
That paints thy Abelard the fatal cause.
On me the wrath of vengeful heav'n descend
(If not thy lover let me be thy friend):
To me the anguish of thy soul resign,
Be thou all innocence—thy guilt be mine.
I dare not now, alas! I cannot love,
Yet may I still a more than lover prove;
To God may I, thy guardian, reconcile
His erring child, while saints rejoicing smile.
Nor will the heaven that floats before thy eyes
Be less if Abelard partake the prize.
In floods of joy thy fainting soul o'erthrown,
Thou may'st, my Eloise, be yet my own.
But, ah! how cold these feeble precepts flow
From lips that warm with lingering passion glow;
More ardent breathes thy deep desponding sigh,
"Come, Abelard, ah! haste thee, hither fly!"

Already flown, my God forsaken,—all
For thee abandoned, I obey thy call.
Laid on that breast that lull'd my life before,
There let me weeping wake the joys of yore.
My shame betraying let me dying burn,
With love whose passion can yield no return.
But ah! what demon fires my guilty soul?
Hence, hence, ye visions that around me roll.
Hear not, ye groves, ye woods refuse to hear
The guilty sounds that strike your trembling ear.
Too faithful, hark! respondent to that sigh,
The startled vales and echoing rocks reply.
Unwonted here 'mid nature's deep repose,
Where sleeps the forest, mute the fountain flows;
Where softly dallying with the trees below,
The breezes whisper and forget to blow;
Where frozen rocks, the burning sun between,
With shades of gloom and terror intervene;
While darkness sleeps beneath o'ermantling
woods,
Whose leafy vault the dying day excludes;
Where groves within majestic groves recede,
And waving forests still to forests lead;
Where nature deadened in eternal gloom,
Presents to life a picture of the tomb.

Although for thee the joys of heav'n I lose,
Dearer than heav'n, thee too hard Fates refuse.
In vain religion would with pomp appal,
Or back to God my wandering heart recal;
Yet should'st thou only breathe one feeble sigh,
How quickly homeward to thy breast I fly!
In dreams of love my frantic soul consume,
Awhile forgetting my relentless doom;
Till famish'd passion high my bosom swells,
When shame awakening all the dream dispels.

Roll back, ye years! return, ye joyful hours,
Whose footsteps glided o'er a path of flowers;
Ere yet to pleasure had thy spotless mind,
The calm repose of Innocence resigned;
While seeking thine, these eyes unbidden stray'd,
Nor felt the wound that silent looks conveyed;
As led by science through her magic grove,
With careless steps we blameless loved to rove;
Where fanned by fragrant gales that softly blew,
Beneath our feet enchanted flow'rets grew.
Spring gaily wantoned in the fairy scene,
With winning smiles that woo'd the budding green.
Oft o'er the legends of historic lore,
Pleased with their toil, our eye-lids used to pore.

For love had stol'n the garb that learning wears,
And unsuspected laid his artful snares,
The laughing boy assumed the look of age,
Kindling his torch, to scan the lettered page:
Our eyes bewildered by the tempting glare,
Gazed till they caught the fire that quiver'd there.
Triumphant then his mask aside he threw,
Fluttered his wings and smiling onward flew,
To where, reclining in her classic shade,
The pensive goddess of the lyre was laid.
The wild Eolian harp, the sounding shell,
Awoke at intervals her echoing cell;
While softly answering breath'd the murm'ring gale,
In dying accents whisp'ring down the dale.
There, where the willow hangs his head and weeps
In graceful anguish o'er his native deeps,
Our voices mingling melted in the sound
Of falling waters as they dashed around,
Or more melodious from thy faltering tongue,
Fell the soft strains love-breathing bards had sung;
While o'er the lyre whene'er this hand was thrown,
Sprang from its touch a music not my own.
In every note the voice of love arose,
With real pangs I told fictitious woes.

Till, ah! too fatal,—too, too fatal day
(I well remember how you listening lay),
While I was reading of that lover's bliss,
Whose lips all trembling stole their fond first kiss:*
And, oh! 'twas heav'n when those sweet lips of thine
All-quivering panted as they fed on mine!—
Forgive me, God! these wand'ring thoughts forgive,
For thee, and not for love, 'tis mine to live.
Sister (since now ev'n Abelard can claim
From Eloise no more endearing name),
Forget in dreams descending from above
The sad remembrance of our hapless love.
Perchance in regions of eternal light
May parted lovers once again unite;
Where some glad Eden's never-fading flowers
May bloom to grace their hymeneal bowers.
There on my breast thou guiltless may'st recline,
Our human passion changed to love divine.
When time no more shall transient joy bestow,
But love immortal in thy breast shall glow:
While youth shall hover o'er thy changeless brow,
Be as thou art, be all that thou art now;

* La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.—DANTE, INFER.

Lose not one fault, if fault there be of thine,
Not ev'n would that my boundless love resign;
While thy eternity of bliss shall be
Consumed, concentrated, alone in me!
For ours was love, not such as fleeting fires
The grovelling mind, with passion's low desires.
But, ah! we lived for love, for love alone,
(So warm, it might ev'n for its guilt atone)
While from thy lips their balmy breath I drew,
'Twas all I asked, 'twas all the bliss I knew;
For thou wert mine, I thought nor dreamt of more,
Adoring thee, 'twas all I could adore.
And sure, if happiness on earth descend,
'Tis thus when kindred hearts uniting blend.
How swift the memory of departed joys
The deadly touch of wasting time destroys!
While dipt in dyes that never-fading glow,
No suns efface the characters of woe.
So thus the smoothest brow is doomed to wear
Through life the deep-drawn traces of despair;
While the bright smile that fires fond kindling eyes,
One moment flashes, then for ever flies.

But why arouse me to awake again,
The flame that feeds my passion and my pain?
Ev'n now I seem to see thy tempting form,
Thy radiant eyes, thy breast with transport warm;
My heaving heart a dread oppression feels,
A misty veil the light of day conceals;
Fast through my lips my panting anguish thrills,
My bursting veins a flood of passion fills:
Oh! spare, oh! spare me, pitying God; to thee,
My only refuge, from myself I flee.

In vain, ye walls, your never-changing gloom
Surrounds me with the silence of the tomb.
Back to the tempting world I left behind,
Strays from its sacred home my wandering mind.
In vain, in vain, this holy garb I wear;
Falls from my lips polluted every prayer.
No hymns of mine on seraph-wings arise,
'Mid clouds of incense wafted to the skies.
God will not share the guilty love that burns,
For him and thee, within my breast by turns.
By angry angels that surround his throne,
Wide to the winds my idle vows are blown.
Say, Eloisa, wilt thou then conspire,
To rouse thy vengeful God to jealous ire?

Oh! rather come, to him my heart resign;
I give him more, for ah! I give him thine;
For him a throne within thy breast prepare,
For even God might fix his dwelling there.
Ah! write not to me, think no more of me,
Thy Abelard no longer lives for thee.
Come to thee? no, ev'n love forbids thee now
To mark my fireless eye, my furrowed brow.
For youth has fled, nor left one trace behind,
To paint that form he has to age resigned.
The glowing picture that thy fancy drew
Deep on thy heart, is, ah! no longer true.
But let me come, behold me now—no more
The Abelard that fired thy breast before;
Gaze on the victim of thy fatal flame,
Till grief, not passion, rouse thy guilty shame.
And learn, too late, the dread heart-rending doom
On love attendant ere it reach the tomb.
That living death, when age's wasted form
Still burns with all its youthful passion warm.
What fires can love to light this gaze supply,
For faintly beams my half-benighted eye?
Ah! now, not ev'n those lightening eyes of thine
Could strike one last, faint, dying spark from mine;

But cold and cheerless as pale Dian glows,
Her rays reflected dim from frozen snows,
Falls mute my glance, that once on wings of flame
Could waft each wish, as from my heart it came.

For thee glad Youth in all his gallant prime
Smooths as they furl the ruffled plumes of Time;
Gilds the bright moments of the sunny hour
That tempts the blossom of the tender flower.
To me dull Age with chilling hand appears,
To chain the footsteps of my lingering years.
Bids even death a dreader form assume,
And scornful points in triumph to the tomb.

So when two flowers one stem unites to bring
Fair nature's tribute to the shrine of spring.
The first, too early blown, its bloom displays,
And smiles (how soon!) away its envious days:
To scent the winds its wanton fragrance flings,
Then fades, but fading to the stem still clings;
Whereon there hangs, yet budding by its side,
The blushing partner of its former pride.
So, linked by fate in one unequal chain,
We, like those flowers, united now remain.

By love forsaken, God, wilt thou receive,
The wreck that his insatiate passions leave?

Now worn with care, who will for me assuage
Or share the sorrows of advancing age?
'Tis youth alone can friendship's joys impart,
'Tis youth that first finds access to the heart.
The boy's gay comrade grows his youthful friend,
While breasts yet warm uniting pleasures blend.
Both sinking low their aged arms entwine,
Lean on one staff, beneath one tree recline.
But can I now on love's soft breast repose,
That faithless friend my idle fancy chose?
Ah! me, my age his blooming youth reviles,
With eye that wantons, and with lip that
smiles.
Again at thy neglected altar laid,
Forgiving God, to thee I fly for aid.
Home to thy breast thy helpless offspring take,
Forsake not him, O God! whom all forsake!
The world, the wide, wide world contains for me
No home, no friend to whom I now can flee,
To share the lonely warfare that I wage,
With guilt, with anguish, with deserted age.
Farewell!—how much that one short word
contains!
Adieu to thee,—and what to me remains?

No, no; I see the groves of Eden rise,
An opening heaven expands before my eyes;
On angel-wings I seek their blest abode,
And lose my Eloise to reach my God.

RETIREMENT:

A Poem.

Lo! they fleet in radiant round,
Years of plenty, years of joy;
Sorrow's place no more is found,
Cares that vex, or sweets that cloy.

MATHIAS.

TO

HARRIET, LADY DRUMMOND,

OF LOGIE ALMOND,

This Poem

IS DEDICATED,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION OF HER NEPHEW,

THE AUTHOR.

Naples, April 12, 1829.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION OF RETIREMENT.

THE following Poem is again presented before the public in an altered, if not an emended form. It differs not less than its author from its former self.

Mutability may be a crime; but let those who are of a similar opinion illustrate their theory by anything that remains stationary (their own impervious ignorance only excepted) in this variable world. Truth is, indeed, eternal: but unhappily the daggers of mankind remain yet drawn and bloody to dispute the limits which ought to ascertain her peaceful abode. Virtue, reason, and religion are equally immutable; but hypocrisy,

sophistry, and vice have assumed masks which so cunningly resemble their prototypes, that the originals are undistinguishable from their portraits in the carnival of nations.

An Introduction has been prefixed to the following Poem: and the author fears that the portico may be accused of overshadowing the pile. But it will afford a specimen of the structure of the building; and give to those who object to its materials a warning to recross its threshold.

Pisa, Nov. 22, 1833.

ARGUMENT.

INTRODUCTION.—The subject proposed.—Thalia prefers the forests of Hæmus, the floods of Hebro, of Avon, of Arno, or of the Mincio to Olympus.—The retirement of Virgil—of the lover.—The woods the retreat of the poet—of Pan—of Orpheus.—The Garden of Eden.—The retirement of Adam and Eve.—The change that the world underwent;—its happiness in its primeval state;—that of England when a savage clime, and apart from the commerce of Europe.—The march of vice kept pace with that of refinement in ancient Rome.—The honours decreed to war followed on the march of refinement.—The idolatry of Ambition.—Cicero in retirement.—The woods at evening—at sunrise;—their contrast afforded by a city adorned with trophies.—The retirement of Science from the turmoil of cities;—that of the astronomer.—The regularity of the physical compared with the disorder visible in the moral world.—The retirement of the disappointed man illustrated by that of Iölas.—The trophies and nameless records of human pride, visible at Rome, warn the wise to fly to retirement.—Cæsar and Annibal proofs of the emptiness of human greatness.—The woods contain no trophies —The retirement of the hermit.—Gibbon and Rousseau in retirement.—The misery of Charles V. in solitude.—The happiness of blameless age—exemplified.—The poet's wish for retirement.—Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION.

LET him who would by Knowledge dwell
Betake him to her mossy cell;
And pure from nature's living page
Transcribe the wisdom of the sage.
For bright, on ev'ry leaf engrav'd,
Is flow'ry mead by knowledge pav'd.
All emblematic is exprest
The woodland's many-colour'd vest.
In ev'ry bud of rare device
Lurks science of immortal price.
The tissue of the tender green;
The blossom of enamell'd sheen;
The vein, wherein ambrosial flows
The blushing life-blood of the rose;
Her lips, that opening sweet at eve,
The balmy tears of heav'n receive;

Or glad at fragrant morn exhale
The laughing burthen of the gale ;
All, scorn'd albeit, by vulgar eyes,
The wisest cannot rightly prize.

Hush'd is the world, when Knowledge hears
The golden music of the spheres.
Alike the darkling bird, alone
Awakes their solitary tone.
Disdainful of the common choir,
Pauses abrupt the heavenly lyre ;
Nor mingles low in mortal chime,
But floats o'er its own realms sublime.
Save only murm'ring Echo caught,
Like ravish'd fire of godly thought,
That fetter'd to terrestrial strings,
Uplifts them on her soaring wings.

But there, where frantic Folly speeds
The dance that mad'ning Pleasure leads,
While fast her wanton footsteps suit
Their paces to lascivious lute ;
Amid like din, can access find
The notes of heav'n, to vulgar mind ?

Alone, where Folly ne'er intrudes
Courts Knowledge shady solitudes.

Fairer than Hebe, from her mien
The Loves and Graces smile serene.
Herself the offspring of a God,
She walks as though on heav'n she trod.
While Nature, to her awless gaze,
The deeps of ocean open lays.
The secret treasures of the mine,
That soon by Guilt shall burnish'd shine;
By her alone yet unador'd,
Her eye undazzled has explor'd.
Her glance beyond this compass'd world
Far into fath'mless space is hurl'd.
She rends the mantle of the skies,
Olympus greets her guiltless eyes:
And rapt into celestial scenes,
In Jove's high council intervenes.
Or flashing into Pluto's shades,
Their horrid gloom unscar'd invades;
Till back primeval Night retreats
Recoil'd into her inmost seats;
There, as her murky flight recedes,
The nymph pursues, nor hell impedes.
Her ken into th' eternal past,
Is fearless, penetrating cast.

She pierces Chaos, and her gaze
Creation's awful dawn surveys.
That calming elemental strife,
Calls Nature into infant life.
The separated sea and land
Asunder, 'neath her eyes, expand.
She sees Cybele tow'ring crown'd ;
Hears Neptune lash the quaking ground.
While fierce his ireful tempest raves,
That hurl'd on heav'n piles waves on waves,
She climbs the mountains of the deep,
And rides serene the foaming steep.

She marks Aurora, first when strow'd
By flowers was trac'd the sunny road ;
When first immortal, flaming broke
From curbing Night, Day's radiant yoke ;
When all the incense of the field,
And balmy groves to life reveal'd,
From blossoms of unnumber'd dyes,
Join'd in the laughter of the skies.

Then Knowledge on the chariot springs
Of Phœbus, clinging by his wings ;
And like the year her course defines,
When wheel'd through all the starry signs.

More awful, lo! her might invests
Heav'n, and from Jove his thunder wrests;
Ev'n fearless dares from redd'ning hand,
Dart back th' inimitable brand.
Before her eyes th' historic scroll
Bids Time anew past ages roll;
While Justice seated by her side,
The deeds of men before her glide.
At her tribunal proud appears
The good, and high his brow uprears.
The bad abash'd, his craven mien
Into the dust is sinking seen.
The tyrant then, his doom revers'd,
Glows red in blood, he shed, immers'd.
Earth faithful kept the boon in store,
And drank but to disgorge his gore.
Nor lost one drop of all she quaff'd,
Again she metes the horrid draught:
Forc'd on his lips the goblet fills,
Though fast he swallow, o'er it spills,
And crimson dyes the loathsome feast,
From whence he ne'er shall be releas'd.
No more those notes of revel ring,
Lascivious minstrels shameless sing;

Lest misery's voice, by clamour rude,
Might on his wanton board intrude :
And tell him from pale, famish'd lips,
Was snatch'd the cup, he sated sips.
But other music now complains
In tragedy's terrific strains.
Upon his writhing ears accurst,
The groans of tortur'd nations burst;
The clanking chains that anguish wore;
The rending heart-strings that he tore;
All on his ear tremendous swell,
The blended harmony of hell.

Ambition of her bright disguise
Low stript, by Knowledge, shrunken lies,
She raises pyramids to hide
Her dust, that substance of all pride;
Yet scornful Time has to the wind,
The treasure in his sport consign'd.
Nor sacred more, has Pharaoh slept
Than slave unburied and unwept.

What has young Ammon's sickle reap'd
From ploughshare tenfold crimson steep'd,
What? but a lesson that the rod
Of worlds, and altars of a god,

Leave craving still his vacant soul,
Whose grasp may seize on either pole.
  Say art not thou, Ambition, 'sham'd
By hands that have thy sceptre claim'd?
By clotted hands, that horrid cling
To thy fell scourge, that viper's sting?
Say is't then royal to have run
The race of Timour or the Hun?
And when thy wheels shall flashing roll
Reckless around that gory goal,
The chariots of the world shall mete,
Whose coursers yok'd are human feet,
Canst thou away no laurels bear,
But those thy Attila must share?
To wreaths unlike that Knowledge wove
In hallow'd academic grove.
Where god-like Wisdom awful sate,
High balancing the scales of fate.
  Once Plato left his blissful shade,
To royal courts a guest convey'd.
Upon his neck the tyrant falls,
So virtue, sceptr'd vice, appals;
For in the sage the monarch owns
An image of the Lord of thrones.

Till turn'd familiar Wisdom's mien
Lost half its bright majestic sheen,
For clouded in so dark abode,
Pale and eclips'd it coldly glow'd.
Like to the peerless orb, whose light
Darts dreadest from its loftiest height;
When all his canopy is rent
Of clouds, he fills the firmament;
Nor in excess of might endures
One star beside, but all obscures.
So Wisdom beams, when far remote
The mists of life below her float;
As Etna rears his placid form,
Beyond the labour of the storm;
Beholds her black terrific throes,
As from her womb the tempest flows.
That flashing awful into life,
The world below involves in strife.
So Knowledge tow'rs alone serene,
Above this sublunary scene.
Thus Plato shone, afar survey'd,
Calm in his academic shade.
But in the Syracusan court,
His wisdom lost its proud report.

And what? though virtue rul'd awhile,
Soon vice regain'd the tyrant's smile.
And Plato, all but only spurn'd,
Back to his genial groves return'd.
If vain his stately steps forsook
The palmy bow'r, and amber brook,
How then shall lesser wisdom dwell
Secure beyond her rugged cell?
Come! trace her to the blithsome woods,
Nor deem her presence joy excludes.
When on her mossy seat reclin'd,
Beams from her brow her ardent mind.
Behold her at her tiny board,
That simplest art has plenteous stor'd:
Where from her heart o'erflowing springs
A relish tasted not by kings.
Herself, into her temp'rate bowl,
Inspires the fragrance of the soul;
Caught from her eyes, reflected shine
The sparkling glories of the vine.
Behold her when her eyelids close,
Dissolving into soft repose:
Unruffl'd dreams, so live the best,
Congenial flutter round her rest.

Go mark her at the lively dawn,
Walk forth upon the scented lawn;
When, rous'd by morn, all nature wakes,
The flow'r unveil'd its slumber breaks;
The forest opes its eyes of bloom:
The groves exhale their glad perfume;
On ev'ry bough, its minstrel bird,
The morning hymn is chanting heard;
When earth's fair off'rings high aspire,
Pure from one censer, and one choir.
Shall Knowledge then be wanting there,
In Nature's universal pray'r?
Say shall her voice be silent when
The woods usurp the tongues of men?
But noblest when her day declines,
The front of Knowledge placid shines.
When kindled, at the torch of Hope,
On brighter worlds her eyelids ope.
At once, concentrate in her gaze,
The past and future she surveys.
Like sun between two hemispheres,
Who pois'd on either verge appears.
Warm as though ruddy from the heart,
His beams on climes forsaken dart;

As if in sorrow he resign'd
The weeping world, he leaves behind :
Where still, to some high cliff there clings,
The radiance of his parting wings—
But all his energy he lends
To climb that heav'n his morn ascends ;
So Knowledge lifts her dying eyes
Warm from the world, all-brilliant to the skies.

RETIREMENT.

The peaceful vale, and deep, secluded plain,
Wherein Ambition never stooped to reign,
Invite the murmurs of my rural lyre,
To wake to numbers that their woods inspire.
Nor are the woods, their sages, and their swains,—
Woods where the nightingale alone complains,—
Rude song, ungrateful to Thalia's ear,
For them forsaking oft her starry sphere;
From halls, where Jove's Olympian domes expand,
From dewy cups, at Hebe's roseate hand,
To forest flies that cold o'er Hæmus waves;
To groves, with inspiration, Hebro laves;
Her plumes by Avon folds, or Arno's tide,
Where yet her swans majestically glide;

Or 'lights on vales, where softly Mincio flows,
As rising breasts fond lover's arms enclose;
Where still the magic of their Maro's strains
Enchants the woods and hovers o'er the plains,
Mourns in the murmur of the rustling trees,
Or floats sonorous on the solemn breeze.

When to that vale the beauteous bard retired,
Warm grew the woods, with life his soul inspired:
The captive echoes bore his notes along,
Compelling rocks to soften at his song;
The listening brooks in rapture ceased to flow,
While hushed was plaintive Philomela's woe;
The lark, descending from its home on high,
Flew to the grove, forgetful of the sky;
While every songster mutely smoothed its wing;
For vanquished Nature heard her master sing.

Thrice happy woods! to you the blooming fair
Confides her hopes, unbosoms all her care;
To rocks around, to listening stars above,
Breathes the first whisper of her burning love;
Starts as she speaks, and blushes though alone,
To tell a passion 'tis no shame to own.

Thrice happy woods! though not unfading now
Falls the frail leaf that clothes the fragile bough:

Though past is Eden's evanescent bloom,
While haunts the groves a more terrestrial gloom;
Yet to your shades impassioned bards retire,
To sound the shell, or strike the lofty lyre.

'Twas in the forests Pan first taught the reed
To wake the whisp'ring echoes of the mead;
His rural loves to nymphs and satyrs told,
Or lulled his flocks within their rustic fold.

Ye sacred woods! that, partners of his grief,
With Orpheus wept from every plaintive leaf;
Heard every moan that from his bosom rose,
Respondent, melting to his tuneful woes;
Caught their last sigh as on his lips it died,
And "lost Eurydice" once more replied;—
With joy if redolent your groves appear,
Though fade their glory with the waning year;
What brilliant hues had dyed the living scene
When waved the groves of Eden's deathless green!
When palms arose no conqueror had profaned;
When smiled the cypress yet by grief unstained;
When olives, more than emblematic, spread
Their leaves, that showers of healing honey shed;
When balm spontaneous on the mountains grew,
That wept for gladness in the twilight dew;

When one wide paradise uniting bloomed,—
One spicy gale the flowery groves perfumed :—
As Zephyr sweet from blest Arabia sweeps,
On plumes enamelled, o'er her pearly deeps :
For Nature started from the lap of spring,
As from his eyry soars the feathery king.

How fall'n ! ah me ! what wintry gloom invades
The bowers of Eden, and her verdant glades.
How fall'n ! since issuing from his hand, sublime
Th' Eternal paused—to mark the birth of Time.
A shout of wonder heaven's whole angels raised,
As dazzled on the rival sphere they gazed.
To God's unsullied throne, his earth new-born
Pure incense wafted on that fragrant morn ;
Rose from the woods one universal voice,
Till distant planets heard their tongues rejoice :
For every leaf was vocal,—every flower
Symphonious hymned creation's natal hour ;
Till awe-struck Nature trembled to behold
Her Lord, uprising in ethereal mould ;
Mute grew the woods, the brooks in silence ran,
For God's own image lightened forth from man.

Then infant Time from grove to garden strayed,
While he, untried, his downy flight essayed ;

Nor yet invidious of his wanton power,
Forgetful, sported with the dallying Hour;
O'er Eden blooming in immortal spring,
Waved the glad plumage of his radiant wing;
Where in retirement, only angels broke,
To life the parents of mankind awoke:
One happy solitude the world—their own;
Nor lonely, when, in innocence, alone.

Then golden rolled the blissful days along,
No fabled dreams of visionary song;
While harvests waved luxuriant on the plain,
Without the labour of the wearied swain;
Uncultured fruits, and flowers unbidden grew,
For man was blameless, and creation new.

So dawned the world: a moment, and, undone,
Earth lost her beauty, blushed the darkened sun;
The sterile plain and unproductive wild
Frowned where an Eden had so lately smiled.

As ruthless age usurps some beauteous form,
Chilling the pallid lips with love once warm,
Furrows the marble front where dimly roll
Eyes that have lost the language of the soul:
So in our clouded world we faintly trace
The faded features of its former grace,

The wasted lineaments that serve to tell
The pride from whence its dazzling glory fell.
Then followed ages still to fame unknown,
Ere yet had pealed the trumpet's deadly tone;
While young Ambition scarce aspired to reign,
A village-chieftain, o'er the peaceful swain;
When in the vale, as with the sunset-breeze
The hamlet's smoke rose curling o'er its trees,
Enthroned in his hereditary seat
Reclined their sire—his kingdom at his feet;
The blooming daughter on her mother leant,
Their father o'er his kneeling offspring bent,
With opening lip, fixed eye, and eager ear
Imbibing counsel from the hoary seer;
As crowned by years in patriarchal pride
The blameless sage became his people's guide;
From love paternal, not for vain applause,
Obeyed, unhated, gave his village laws.
For rugged virtue with primeval sway
Taught savage realms to tremble and obey;
And happier 'chance, retired, and hardly known,
When slumbered valour on her destined throne;
Scorned as an island that old Ocean bore
Far on his wild, extreme, and frozen shore;

Fierce Albion's sons, rude Nature all their guide,
Through forests roved, nor dared the briny tide;
Unknown to them the new and distant world,
Where floats the banner, that they bore, unfurled;
Those arts unknown, whereby ennobled man
His ocean, earth, e'en heaven itself, can scan;
Sees suns eclipsed no tyrant's blood portend;
Sees lightnings flash, nor Jove's red arm impend;
Through darkened deeps his mazy course can steer,
Contracts the bounds of his diminished sphere,
Pursues the farthest planets as they roll,
Compels the tides, and hears the sounding pole.
Yet mark how vice on art attendant moves,
How with refinement, guilt progressive proves.
Why lies the distaff, once the matron's pride,
Linked with her rustic virtue, spurned aside?
What new Lucretia is designed by fate
To die, and save her honour and the state?
Lives there no Cato? or can nature feel
On her decrepid age destruction steal?
Could she herself have first profaned the flood
Of Roman valour with adult'rous blood?
Could she soft venom into veins instil
Where force and freedom poured the burning rill?

Till, more polluted in each new embrace,
Expired the Roman in his lifeless race.
With arts coeval red Ambition rose
Arousing nations from more blest repose;
Bade man first deify relentless War,
Then yoked in madness drag his gilded car;
To heaven uplift the gory fiend, and blind,
From hell evoke the scourge of human kind.
Armed with the might of ages, lo! she brings
Beneath her yoke the necks of slaves, or kings.
Her's the dread chain no human hand can burst;
That binds the world, though by the world accurst.
Roused at her voice whole nations draw the sword,
Her idol towers in every clime adored.
For ever fed her blazing altar glows—
Time ne'er beheld her flooding portals close.
On lives of blood, her fell achievements built,
Virtues become, and lose the brand of guilt.
When Freedom fell, and Rome was great no more,
Her slaves not Cæsar, but his power adore.
Nor while their idol in his rod they see,
Would change their golden fetters to be free.
Yet weigh ambition in great Cæsar's end,
He grasps the world, and falls without a friend.

But from the wreaths that conqu'ring chiefs obtain,
(Oft all the produce of whole fields of slain),
Fly to the sage whose pitying love surveyed
Mankind from Tusculum's retiring shade;
Whose soul, on earth, no lowly dwelling found,
But soared majestic o'er the world around;
Smiling at ills that from our nature spring,
He wept for crimes whereto our vices cling,
Soft as the murmur of Hyblæan bees,
At morning wafted o'er Sicilian seas;
Sweet as the gale's ambrosial fragrance blows
From Arno's glades, at autumn evening's close,
Melodious melted from his dewy tongue
Words, o'er whose cadence Rome in rapture hung:
Thoughts, that by all his country's soul, inspired;
Glow in the language of the gods, attired,
Wherein he still, while empires waste away,
Lives, speaks, commands, unconscious of decay.
Tread lightly, wanderer, o'er that hallowed ground,
Nor wake the dryads in the groves around;
For once while musing thro' those woods I strayed,
Methought I saw the genius of the shade;

His eye bespoke the freedom of a soul
Not earth's united tyrants could control;
His brow was calm, as at his closing breath
He gazed serenely on the stroke of death.

How dread the forest when at moonlight ev'n,
A silvery lustre tips the sombre green.
While black their shadows, from the hills, descend,
The rocks more awful o'er the floods impend,
Expanding groves in gradual darkness lost,
Grow on the gaze, and fancy's dreams exhaut.
Fantastic shapes, their flitting shades assume.
With Terror sporting in the peaceful gloom.
The brooks, resounding through the vocal dell,
With deeper cadence on the list'ner swell.
The river rolls in more sonorous pride ;
Or still by turns, his waters deadlier glide.
The murm'ring leaves with sadder rustling moan .
The chirping locust tunes a hoarser tone ;
While sternly awful, nature's living page
Speaks, at that hour, to every clime and age.
Not to the Jew her jealous cares confined,
Her language one, her voice instructs mankind.
Back on itself repels the inward eye,
(Reversed the mirror of its scrutiny)

There in the dark recesses of the breast
Bids mortals weigh the measure of their rest.
How glad the woods! when at the dawning morn
They first re-echo to the shepherd's horn;
Their leaves all glittering with the tears of eve,
The blushing footsteps of the day receive.
Harmonious choirs salute his smiling rays,
While life and gladness wanton in his gaze;
Nature attired in renovated charms,
Awakes to clasp him in her opening arms;
The fleecy clouds, irradiate as the glow,
Enamoured crown the purple hills with snow;
The sun, emerging from the crimson deep,
Glad'ning all heaven, ascends the godlike steep.
Who then could deem, when, laughing, meets his eye
An earth embraced by her resplendent sky,
That reigns, relentless, all-triumphant, there
Death leagued with guilt, embittered by despair?
But where the city pours her busy train,
Usurps the sky, encroaches on the main,
How idly toils delusive art to throw
A veil of pleasure o'er intruding woe!
Why springs yon arch? alas! how shall it tell
Of him who conquer'd, without those that fell?

Though proud his front yon marble statue rears
The widow pined in unavailing tears;
The mother, childless, gazing on that stone,
Asked back one son—one surely was her own.

In silence nursed, pale Science loves to scan
The boundless wisdom of creation's plan;
Far from the turmoil of the proud and great,
With Heaven conversant, learns the laws of Fate;
On wings that leave exhausted worlds behind,
Yet far beyond ascends the soaring mind;
To climes of terror and eternal night,
Or high to regions where their god is light;
Till awed and lost within the shoreless maze,
Her eagle-eye is blinded in its gaze.

Hark! midnight's voice admonitory calls
To Folly lingering in her festive halls;
While Galileo to his secret tower
Retires to animate the lifeless hour.
Pierces the starry vault, where quenchless burn
Resplendent orbs that to their goal return;
Worlds, that on high their revolutions ran
Ere yet, perchance, the flight of time began;
O'ertakes the threat'ning comet as it flies,
And fires the darkness of affrighted skies:

Measures vast planets that majestic trace
Their mazy circles upon shoreless space,
Sees each, the path eternal laws prepare,
Terrific hold upon the buoyant air;
O'er trackless realms unerring orbits keep
Pensile, yet swift as angry lightnings sweep;
Or dreams of spheres that endless may expand
O'er climes that even thought has trembling
scanned;
Worlds, that as stars from distant worlds are seen,
And suns benighted in the blue serene.

Yet while those orbs their nature's laws obey,
Man, only man, presumes to rush astray.
If, all but powerless in his little sphere,
He ranks an animated atom here,
What in the mighty infinite his space?
Where, in eternity, his time or place?

Yet on the fath'mless depths of knowledge cast,
His daring sail uprears its fragile mast.
A treach'rous ocean, on whose tempting wave
The timid bark but floats above its grave:
Launched boldly forth, some gallant vessel sweeps,
With happy winds, along the rising deeps;
Mounts on the floods, and lashes into foam
The bridled waters, that she makes her home.

The world of science, in her course, explores—
Imposes tribute on a thousand shores;
Measures the globe; and, by a needle led,
To port returns, with every sail outspread.
Nor only Science to retirement flies
To swell the narrow circle of the wise;
Thither, his mad career of folly run,
See Pleasure drive at length her satiate son;
Forsake the courts where mirth and riot dwell,
To find a cottage in the woodland dell.
High in the halls of erst imperial Rome,
The young Iölas found his lordly home;
His fleeces whiten'd wide Apulia's hills;
His herds exhausted half her sparkling rills.
Luxurious grandeur swelled his gorgeous state
With all the splendour that deludes the great;
From Parian columns, high o'er-arching thrown,
His fretted roofs sprung like the starry zone.
The gold of Hermus flowed into his halls;
Where Grecian statues lived along the walls.
What! though his courts, by scented slaves, were fanned,
The breezes wake not at a slave's command:
Fast by their warbling brooks the Zephyrs stray'd,
Sighed in the vale, or slumbered in the shade:

In costly streams his laboured fountains fell,
But mocked the floods he fancied to excel.
Let urns of polished alabaster hold
Their sparkling waters in a glittering mould,
Who would for them the moss-grown fount
forsake,
That springs unhonoured in the 'tangled brake?
Ah! none but he, who like Iölas throws
Around him chains that laws of art impose,
Curbs the fair freedom that creation gave,
And sinks from nature's lord to custom's slave.
In vain his minstrels struck the lifeless lyre,
Its languid notes had lost their wonted fire;
For only Freedom wings those thrilling sounds,
Whose magic through the kindling breast
rebounds.
Go, hear the song the captive skylark pours,
Then hear his music as he mounting soars;
For Slavery's voice, like captive music dies,
While Freedom lifts her language to the skies.
For fair Iölas, not the revel now
Dispelled the cloud that darkened o'er his brow;
Not love, attendant with alluring charms,
Could win him to his Galatea's arms:

In vain her slaves the flowery couch prepare ;
The roses faded, for he came not there ;
Distant he roved among those woods that throw
A gloom terrific o'er the gulf below,
Where loud, old Anio's voice majestic seems
Calm, to compose again his frantic streams ;
At once the waves, obedient to his call,
Rise, but to flow more softly from their fall.

"Thrice happy swains!" the sad Iölas cried :
"Thrice happy swains!" the willing groves replied:
"Ah ! deem not, no, those lenient fates unkind,
That you, to tend your happy flocks, consigned :
For you glad breezes wanton in the glade,
For you cool streamlets murmur in the shade ;
O'er-arching boughs a canopy supply
To shield your slumbers from the burning sky ;
Fair Nature's hand the flowery carpet wove
She spreads beneath you in the spangled grove ;
For you the lily, drooping as it blooms,
The passing Zephyr, in his flight, perfumes ;
The Zephyr lightly, as he onward springs,
Wafts back the perfume from his balmy wings.

"What though the wealth of Avarice may hoard
The fruits that languish on her costly board,—

For you the horn of laughing Plenty pours
A richer banquet from her boundless stores.
Although for you no sparkling goblets shine,
No springing fountains fall in showers of wine;
Ne'er from attendance on the great released,
Care comes not, knows not, of your frugal feast:
What! though no slaves to distant Ind repair
To dig for gems to deck the peasant's hair;
Beneath her feet she may those myrtles find,
Whose wreaths the locks of Love's own goddess
bind:
And oh! that love the peasant only knows,
When heart may safely upon heart repose;
While no deceit deludes his artless eyes
With those fair phantoms polished life supplies;
Where Cupids fan the scattered flowers of love,
As though they blossomed in their bowers above;
Where love, all-cherished for itself alone,
Unrivalled, rears in every breast a throne.
"But in the smiles that fawn around the great,
How oft hypocrisy disguises hate!
Can they from friendship flattery discern,
Or love from lust, that baser passions learn?
By wealth empoisoned flows life's troubled stream,
Though gilding sunbeams on its surface gleam;

True love, true friendship, still to wealth denied,
And what without them is the world beside?
" Farewell, proud Rome! with you I now resign
Those cares that better slumbered in the mine.
Farewell, ye dreams of grandeur and of power,
Ye shifting shadows of the changeful hour.
" Come to the woods, my Galatea! here
Thy love will warmer in the woods appear:
Yon cottage wedded to its clasping vine,
Whose casements watch the peaceful day's decline,
Shall, from the bosom of its still retreat,
Our joy to all the 'raptured woods repeat:
Till, like two leaves, that spring uniting bound.
An autumn breeze shall waft us to the ground;
Then be there carved on our sepulchral stone,—
'They lived, they loved, but for themselves alone.'"
Oh, righteous God! how widely from thy plan
Has rushed the folly of degraded man!
Urged by the love of every mad desire,
The being, blindness, fear, and lust inspire:
His cities, courts, his very tombs, contain
Proofs of the base, and impotently vain.
Behold the Roman all but conquering time
Rear high the records of triumphant crime:

Piles that excite the plaudits of the proud,
Or wake the wonder of the vapid crowd ;
Aspiring obelisks, that now proclaim
The power of those who sleep without a name:
One tomb has crushed the monarch and his slave,
The prostrate palace hides an empire's grave—
All, to retirement, warns the wise to fly,
Teaching the great (could they but learn) to die.
At Pompey's statue let Ambition pause,
While injured Freedom pleads her righteous cause.
Behold her daggers bright-uplifted shine,
While Brutus gives, and heav'n approves the sign.
Hark! 'tis the world aloud for vengeance cries;
The rights of man demand the sacrifice :
And Romans, for there yet were Romans then,
Outshone themselves, more demigods than men :
In one dread effort all their race surpast,
Then fell—that noblest triumph was their last.
Go to the tombs, Ambition; chide thy lust,
Go, weigh, with Juvenal, the hero's dust.
Was he not great as slaughter'd hosts can make
His rival Italy, the world their stake.
Spain, Afric, Alps, all, save the Capitol,
Shake underneath his footsteps as they fall.

He widows Rome—could he have made her weep,
Her pride hurl'd down from its celestial steep;
Her glory blasted in its godlike sheen—
Had Scipio, Pompey, Cato never been.
Nor stamped those letters, whence yet living thrills
Her regal voice from her eternal hills,
Bidding those time-appalling deeds endure;
Whereof eclipsed, art, history had been poor.
So was the Punic warrior; to his tomb
Go, proud Ambition, ponder o'er thy doom.
Bid awful Justice poise her ample scale;
Uplift the marble.—Start not back so pale—
One handful sure?—nay every chink explore—
And eke of Annibal some ounces more.
But in the woods no trophied tombs arise
To brave the lightnings of offended skies;
Nor arches by a nation's blood bedewed
Excite the proud to triumph o'er the good.
Such rustic records as the forests hold,
The blameless wars of love and song unfold;
While of no record will their fates allow
But what is 'graven on some beechen bough;
Whose laughing shades delighted used to shield
Those sports, nor hid by love nor all revealed:

For 'mong the woods the wild and winged boy
Grows yet more wanton as he grows more coy ;
His infant fingers weave the flowery chains
That bind the limbs of rude, Herculean swains ;
The stem that low beneath the lily bends,
Armed, from his bow, a living dart he sends :
His bow a branch that on the Cyprian shore
The myrtle bowers of laughing Venus bore.
The shepherds oft, in happier days of old,
Were wont the playful urchin to behold,
When round him Sleep his arms lascivious threw,
While, scattering fragrance, Zephyrs o'er him flew;
As to some flower, the bee reposing clings,
When wearied droop her honey-laden wings.
But calmest inmate of the lonely dell,
Yon silvery hermit, scoops his rocky cell :
Deep in the still retirement of the grove,
His trembling hands entwine a green alcove.
Fast by, low murmuring o'er its mossy bed,
His beverage glides, from cliffs cool-trickling fed.
To healing herbs extends his antique lore ;
While milk and fruits compose his temperate store.
Skill'd in the seasons, when to reap or sow,
Their seer, to him the wondering peasants go.

Mysterious gloom his hallowed dwelling guards,
And from its precincts wanton steps discards.
Oft, lull'd on meditation's mossy seat,
His staff beside him, rest his travelled feet.
Uncowl'd ; apart his scanty locks, and grey,
The front serene of placid age display.
His clasping hands upon his bosom lie,
While steadfast upward turns his glistening eye.
To blindness, lo! an inward vision lends
The light, the landscape, faith, exulting blends ;
Gilds the glad picture with immortal dyes,
Drawn, like the rainbow's, purer from the skies.
Before him spreads the country of his heart ;
His sackcloth girt, and longing to depart,
From life's worn threshold, outward-turning
stands,
With, all but closed, her portal in his hands.
So, erst created upon canvass, lives
(For art a second animation gives)
The touch that fired the dying Jerome's eye
With light, life, heav'n, and immortality.
So blissful ignorance ; 'chance ill exchanged
For worlds of knowledge, Gibbon wide had ranged:
When he retired, from his acacian shade,
At once his monument and Rome's surveyed,

'Twas genial night; all nature breathless lay,
Woods, waters, mountains tipt by Dian's ray;
Suspended till the sage her silence broke,
And in him animated ages spoke,
His patriot fires, from Livy flashing, caught;
As Briton free, as Roman great, he thought
While vast his energy of soul pursued
Rome headlong cast from heaven whereon she stood;
Fathomed her force, that rousing chaos fell,
Till o'er her rav'nous groaned the gates of Hell.
Then spread, like Antony, an empire's pall
O'er her last Cæsar in the Capitol.
Go mark what balm retirement can bestow
Where sickening penury assails Rousseau.
When independent in a land of slaves,
He customs, creeds, at once, and tyrants braves.
Rending those chains, that social falsely named,
Leave man, from youth to dotage, swathed and maimed;
Our base palæstra; where, Art, as she springs,
Plucks from the mind fair nature's soaring wings.
Then bids, like Dædalus, her waxen toil
Span oceans deep; poor reptile of the soil.

When, save Arquà's thrice tender muse alone,
Love never woke more agonizing tone;
Nor fabled virtue ever learnt to please
Like vanquished guilt in dying Heloise.

Lo! where the sun of bright Iberia shines
On lands that blush below their rosy vines,
There frown a convent's stern and gloomy towers
O'er laughing fields and labyrinthal bowers,
Where woods of citron, dipt in living gold,
At once their blossom and their fruits unfold;
While yet beyond arise majestic pines,
On whose dark boughs the sapphire-sky reclines.
No humanw oes, no foreign ills assail
The peaceful inmates of that tranquil vale;
While, save for what its cypress-groves declare,
'Twould seem a spot that Death himself might spare.

For like repose, descending from a throne
That deemed the sceptre of the world its own:
Wearied of power, and satiate of renown
Pavia's victor cast away his crown;
His rod forsook; on age's reed he bowed
A monk, with rosary, a cell and shroud.
Deeming, by superstition hugged and pent,
To ape Diogenes, and die content.

Though he not half the Macedon had been,
Took to the rival tub with crouching mien.
To prove how many worlds shall fettered be
By slaves, who never have themselves been free;
For one bold Cynic, who can kings deride;
Lord of himself —and feel his empire wide.
"Was it for this?" exclaimed the sack-clothed king,
Spurning his garb, "I wearied conquest's wing.
Peace to my bones, and balsam to my woes,
This idle robe, in impious hour I chose.
Yet hardly girded on the pledge of rest,
Before me sprung my naked soul confest.
Ah! vainly shrouded in this dark disguise,
Escapes it God, thy ocean-fath'ming eyes?
Unleashed upon me, lingered ere thy course,
Scared by this mail, thou viper-fanged Remorse?
Is there no breastplate can thy sting repel?
No 'tempered shield unbarbs the dart of Hell!
Not now for worlds my shorn Ambition sighs,
One hour, oh! God, of slumber to these eyes.
From groans absolved of battle in my ear,
Wild yells of torture, flying shrieks of fear;

The famished hind's; or ravished virgin's woe;
A father's pangs; or widowed mother's throe;
Her childless moans, of many sons the nurse;
A traitor's blessing; or an orphan's curse.
My dungeons, hark! to light aloud appeal.
Cries trumpet-mouthed, yon agonizing wheel.
Daggers, so hushed, by midnight never heard,
Speak thunders to my soul in every word.
Naked no more, in fetters clad, the West
With savage howl, wild imprecates my rest.
Rest—? if communion closed with Hell be sleep,
I full reward for all my greatness reap."
So baleful terrors solitude and age
Relentless stamp upon life's closing page;
When youth no more on waxen wings can rise,
While chased he from pursuing reason flies.
Offended Heav'n can well avenge its laws,
And guide stern Justice to crime's darkest cause.
Around the guilty toils unseen are spread;
Undrawn, the sword of Fate o'erhangs his head.
Fly, let him fly; where shall his anguish find
A path where Vengeance follows not behind?
Fly? yet he carries with him in his breast
The pang that has annihilated rest.

Not so, when tints of ripening autumn throw
O'er life's approaching shades a golden glow;
When from its weary stem the mellow fruit,
Falls light on flowers that blossom round its root.
Though youth to age, life's happy dawn appears,
Give me the sunset of declining years;
Those waning beams that faint and fainter burn,
Then part, but leave a promise to return:
For softly, when the fading day retires,
Lingers behind the halo of its fires.

'Twas so, thy spirit, from its yielding frame
Parted to pour on brighter realms its flame,
When thy own hand, good parent, calmly closed
Thy dying eyes, as though to sleep composed.

Might I, where fair Parthenope reclines,
'Neath azure skies, blue hills, and purple vines,
Devote to classic and ignoble ease
A blameless age, untainted by disease:
Or 'lone, beneath Sorrento's myrtle shade,
In groves where once their loved Torquato strayed,
List to the rippling of that siren-sea,
That should divide the distant world from me.

But other fates (mark these prophetic lines)
Shall nip the plant that e'en already pines.

When he, my friend, (the truest that I know)
Kind Death, shall bid this bosom cease to glow;
Claim that is his, but leave me wings to soar
To realms obedient to his might no more.
Yet ere he come, let me in peace retire
To higher strains to tune a nobler lyre.
"The world forgetting, by the world forgot,"
Be mine reclusion's calm, unenvied lot.
So moored securely on some harb'ring shore,
When rides the laden ship, her voyage o'er;
No more again to tempt the wintry gales,
Furls the glad mariner her shattered sails.
Fettered in wild imagination's bond,
So dark illusion bade my youth despond.
Now when ten summers o'er me triply shine,
Land of my birth and freedom, thou be mine.
Thy purple mountains, and blue-eddying deeps;
The gloom that o'er thy forest brooding sleeps:
All woo me homeward—these Etrurian skies
No longer fascinate my longing eyes.
But where Macbeth, from Birnam's lordly brow,
(Land of my Sires) tore down the wizard bough:
Where Gawin's hand, my native hills among,
Woke Albyn's lyre, since Fingal's deeds unstrung:

There still forgetting, haply and forgot,
Let calm retirement guard my lonely grot.
For yet to Temperance, and to Science spared,
Be my decline with song and friendship shared.
Nor may the worm, that gnawed the flowery shoot,
Grow cankering upward in the ripening fruit.

NOTES.

Page 61, line 5.

'Twas in the forests Pan first taught the reed.

Panaque, qui primus calamos non passus inertes.
VIRG. *Ec.* VIII.

Page 61, line 21.

When olives, more than emblematic, spread
Their leaves, that showers of healing honey shed.

Allusion is here made to the ἐλαομελι, elæomeli, or olive-honey of the ancients. L'Abbé Guénée, in the able treatise which he wrote on the fertility of Judea, describes the elæomeli to be a kind of manna that was collected from the leaves of the olive, the balsam, and palm trees. He does not state his authority for asserting that it was found on the leaves of those trees. Pliny, to whose account he appeals, would rather appear to favour the idea that the elæomeli exuded from their bark.—"Sponte nascitur oleum in Syriæ maritimis quod elæomeli vocant; manat ex arboribus, pingue, crassius melle, resinâ tenuius, sapore dulci," &c.—*Hist. Nat.* xv. 7. On referring to Dioscorides, I find him state that the elæomeli distils from the trunk of the tree. Aristotle speaks of a kind of honey that exuded from the trees in Lydia: and an ancient author, quoted by Suidas, is of opinion that the honey which composed a portion of the food of St.

John the Baptist in the wilderness, was procured from the same source. Diodorus Siculus (I speak from memory) mentions a similar sort.

In favour of the opinion that the elæomeli was obtained from the leaves of the olive, it may be remarked, that the wood of that tree is of so dry a nature as to render it improbable that its sap could frequently have been in a sufficient quantity to have exuded from its bark. The taste of the bark is likewise extremely bitter; not less so than that of the ruddy fruit as it hangs upon the tree. It seems, therefore, far more probable that the elæomeli was deposited by the spicy dews of Palestine, surcharged with sweetness exhaled from that vast garden of aromatic flowers, which falling on the leaves of the olive covered them with a sweet and honied substance.

In support of this idea it may be further adduced, that there is a plant denominated the *melissophyllum*, mentioned by Virgil, which may not unreasonably be supposed to bear that name κατ' ἐξοχην. Maundrell states, that on the sea-coast of Palestine the winds were perfumed with a honied odour.

It appears to be far from improbable that the memorable description of the promised land, "a land flowing with milk and honey," may be an allusion to the elæomeli. Bochart, and other learned authors, have understood that description to refer to the actual labour of the bee deposited in the clefts of rocks, and in the stems of trees. Both circumstances will equally justify the account, given by Moses, of that wonderful country, which produced the honied olive, the most precious palm, and where only the healing balsam was extensively cultivated.

Page 61, line 23.

When balm spontaneous on the mountains grew,
That wept for gladness in the twilight dew.

The balm holds the same rank among plants which has been assigned to the diamond among precious stones. It has been denominated the healing balm; and as its medicinal properties were, in ancient times, applied as a remedy for diseases of the sight, it would have been difficult to have exaggerated their accredited value. It was believed by Pliny and by Dioscorides to have been a plant peculiar to Palestine. But it is now found in Arabia, and is by some believed to be there indigenous. According to Josephus, it was originally brought from Egypt as a gift to Solomon, by Nicaulis, whom he supposes to be the Queen of Sheba mentioned by the sacred historian.

Bochart appears, with justice, to be of opinion that the Hebrew word *tseri* or *tsori*, has been erroneously translated *balm:* Genesis, xliii. 11; and Jeremiah, viii. 22. xlvi. 11. It has been rendered by *resinam* in the Vulgate, as well as the Septuagint. E. Castell differs from the learned Bochart on this point; but the latter author is supported by the authority of Strabo, Theophrastus, and Pliny, who agree in stating, that the balsam plant was cultivated only in the royal gardens near Jericho; whereas, the territory of Gilead was on the opposite side of the river Jordan, and at a considerable distance from that town. The difficulty may be solved, by bearing in mind, that, according to Pliny, the *opobalsamum* was mingled with a species of resin,

which may have been found in the district of Gilead, while the balm was cultivated in the neighbourhood of Jericho.

The Emperors Vespasian and Titus bore the precious plant to Rome, where it graced their triumphal pageant: not, however, before the Jews had endeavoured to destroy the gardens in which it was cultivated, in order to prevent their conquerors from reaping the golden harvest which it annually produced. At length, to use the emphatic words of Pliny, it was enslaved, and passed, along with its former possessors, underneath the Roman yoke.

Page 64, line 23.

Scorned as an island that old Ocean bore
Far on his wild, extreme, and frozen shore.

Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.

VIRG. *Ec.* I. 67.

Page 78, line 1.

Could he have made her weep.

Ut tumultum ac trepidationem in urbe tollant, matronas publico arceant, continerique intra suum quamque limen cogant: comploratus familiarum coerceant.—

TIT. LIV. lib. xxii. 55.

Page 80, line 17.

So, erst created upon canvass, lives.

Allusion is here made to the celebrated picture of the Communion of St Jerome, by Domenichino, in the Vatican.

Page 80, line 23.

From his acacian shade.

See Gibbon's own account of the close of his immortal labours.

Page 84, line 13.

So baleful terrors.

In order to avoid the most grating of all sounds, or rather hisses, *so* has been substituted for *such* in the foregoing poem.

Page 85, line 17.

Devote to classic and ignoble ease.

——— Studiis florentem ignobilis oti.

ELEGY

ON

THE RUINS OF SYRACUSE,

INSCRIBED

TO

THOMAS GARGALLO,

MARQUESS OF CASTELLENTINI, K. S. JANUARIUS, ETC.

IN TESTIMONY

OF ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

ELEGY

ON

THE RUINS OF SYRACUSE.

I.

Is this, then, Syracuse? all wond'ring cries
Pale wand'rer halting on Trinacria's shore,
On wreck reclined of throne that prostrate lies
Where tower'd the Grecian Cybele of yore.

II.

Is this the port where prow on prow impell'd
Clash'd warring fleets, till scared from Ocean's caves
Rose Neptune stain'd with blood, where scarce beheld
Some fisher's bark now cleaves yon azure waves?

III.

Is this the Syracuse that strove with Greece,
In arts, in arms unconquer'd to the last;
Alike her rival or in war or peace,
And but by Rome in majesty surpast?

IV.

Where now the throng whose lofty pean hails
Triumphant Gelon from Imera's walls?
For equalled Salamis his arm prevails,
All Carthage trembles and Amilcar falls.

V.

Since Jove, lest Discord should inflame the skies,
From Athens emulous of Syracuse,
'Neath the same sun divides the world their prize;
Asia the first, Afric the last subdues.

VI.

Else Ceres had with Pallas strife engaged,
High heaven been shaken, hell disclosed again;
Nor only had celestial wars been waged
By gods contending on the Trojan plain.

VII.

Though fall'n his fanes of Parian marble built,
Louder than trophies, hark, mankind proclaim,
"Great Gelon's hand unedged the blade that spilt
Man's blood in rites earth shudders now to name."

VIII.

Then learn, ye monarchs, one illustrious deed,
Not monuments, but cities ev'n outlives;
Gaze on these ample ruins round, and read
That fame immortal only virtue gives.

IX.

No more returning laden from the deep
Exulting crews Minerva's Ægis hail:
The tuneless waves in torpid languor sleep,
Nor flashing oar impels the painted sail.

X.

Yet erst what galleys filled yon vacant port!
Broods silence where the voice of nations rung,
While power and genius graced the splendid court
Where Dionysius reign'd, where Pindar sung.

XI.

That power is past; immortal genius thrives
Like Hebe ever in its glowing prime.
The wreck of thrones Theocritus survives,
Nor fade his laurels from the blight of time.

XII.

Yet ah! me, Doris, with her bitter streams,
Now wastes the waters of sweet Arethuse,
For thee alone, GARGALLO, purely teems
The classic fount of the Sicilian muse.

XIII.

Nor nobler floods from lofty Pindus flow
Than thine chaste Nymph. Nor e'er yon starry chord
On Hebro heard, while yet on earth below
Reaped equal triumph for the Delphic lord,

XIV.

As Grecian bard, when red her laurels stained,
Not prostrate Athens soothed the felon-ire
Of vengeful Syracuse, her captives gained
Both life and freedom from a poet's lyre.

XV.

Such power has genius: and such polished arts
Thy grandeur temper'd, and thy sway adorn'd,
That to these ruins still their fame imparts
The grace, the charm that wasting time have scorn'd.

XVI.

While Rome, o'erwhelm'd by an ignoble fate,
In vain the Vandal's barb'rous rage withstood,
Proud in thy fall, beyond thy victor great,
But by Marcellus was thy might subdued.

XVII.

Nor fell but lordly Syracuse alone;
Trinacria's glory 'neath thy ruin sleeps.
Sits sceptred Famine on thy barren throne,
While vigil round thee Desolation keeps.

XVIII.

From earth, for ravish'd was thy country's pride,
As from thy shores on Enna's flowery dell
Forced from the light was Pluto's struggling bride,
To share the throne of darkness and of Hell.

XIX.

And sure again to seek the hapless maid
At Etna's caves has Ceres fired her brand:
Drawn by her dragons she too long has stray'd,
And why returns not to her favourite land?

XX.

Ah! come again! abandoned now no more
Let Plenty's horn o'erwhelm the teeming plains,
Let fleets of Commerce crowd the festive shore
Where sent from heav'n a new Augustus reigns.

XXI.

Let war recede, and these bright climes admire
Their olives planted by his fostering hand:
Let equal laws, reviving arts acquire
For him the name of "Father of the land!"

XXII.

Such erst was Gelon; and aloud attest
The pride these ruins of the glorious name,
That rear'd such empire, so a Country blest
That envious ages yet adore its fame.

NOTES.

Stanza V. line 4.

Asia the first, Afric the last subdues.

The battles of Salamis and Imera were, according to Herodotus, fought on the same day.

Stanza VII. line 4.

Man's blood in rites earth shudders now to name.

Le plus beau traitè de paix dont l'histoire ait parlé, est, je crois, celui que Gelon fit avec les Carthaginois. Il voulut qu'ils abolissent la coutume d'immoler leurs enfants. Chose admirable ! apres avoir defait trois cent mille Carthaginois, il exigeoit une condition qui n'etoit utile qu'à eux, ou plutot il stipuloit pour le genre humain."

MONTESQUIEU DE L'ESPRIT DES LOIS, livre x. c. v.

Stanza XIII. line 2.

. . . . . *Nor e'er yon starry chord.*

The lyre of Orpheus, changed after his death into a constellation.

Stanza XIV. line 4.

Both life and freedom from a poet's lyre.

The verses of Euripides procured the liberation of those Athenian captives, who had the fortune of being able to recite them, from the caverns to which they were condemned during the Peloponnesian war.

ELEGY

ON THE

CONVENT OF THE GROTTO

AT

AMALFI.

Quò spes firmàstis vanas, quove omine vota
Famæ mansuræ perpetuæve domûs?
Quò splendor? quò prisca fides? altaria narrant
Diruta sacrilegæ regia furta manûs.

T. J. Mathias.

ELEGY

ON

THE CONVENT OF THE GROTTO

AT

AMALFI.

I.

The night hung silent o'er Amalfi's towers,
Save when ashore there broke some rippling wave,
Or melancholy peal'd the solemn hours,
With voice re-echoed from o'er-arching cave.

II.

Fretted with stars sprung vaulted heaven's alcove;
Calm slept the terrors of the deeps below;
Nor aspen quiver'd in the pensive grove,
Where pour'd sad Philomel her plaint of woe.

III.

The lamps adown the convent aisle grew dim;
While faintly died upon the breathless air,
The last low murmur of the midnight hymn,
The Benedicite, the parting pray'r;

IV.

When rush'd a sound as though the tempest's roar
Usurp'd the stillness of the drear abode;
Or lash'd the waves their rock-resounding shore;
The Heathen swept the heritage of God.

V.

Lives there who tearless could that home forsake,
Where laugh'd his childhood, and reposed his age;
His cottage peering through the beechen brake,
Whose trees were graven with his hist'ry's page?

VI.

Then woe's me him, who from that cell is torn,
Where heaven was blended with existence here;
By man upbraided, and of God forlorn;
Left to the scornful unbeliever's sneer.

VII.

Unaw'd the spoiler rent, with impious rage,
The holy shrine to saintly relics given ;
Profan'd the reverend sanctity of age ;
And mock'd, unscath'd, the Majesty of Heaven.

VIII.

" Rise, righteous God, with vengeful wrath arise,
Consume thy foes, collect thy scatter'd fold ;
The Heathen's voice insulting braves the skies ;
The faithful feel their trembling hearts wax
cold."

IX.

Such accents from some hoary father fell,
While anger flash'd across his sunken eye :
There were that mutely wept their last farewell,
Then wander'd forth to languish and to die.

X.

And still 'tis deem'd, along the darksome aisle,
Steal awful notes of terror and despair ;
A clang of arms awakes the desert pile,
Where restless spirits walk the midnight air.

XI.

For human eye with fancy's gifted gaze
Can yet again the rending scene renew ;
Recall the visions of departed days,
Till lives the dream imagination drew.

XII.

While graver moralist may, musing here,
The creeds of men, the care of Heav'n survey,
Where Pagan, Moslem, Christian fanes appear,
Consign'd in turn to mock'ry and decay.*

* From the Convent of the Grotto at Amalfi the distant temples of Pæstum may be discerned, while on a hill that overhangs the town are the ruins of a Saracenic Mosque.

LOVE,

OR

THE GENIUS OF CREATION.

A STATUE OF TACCA.

IMITATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE

MARQUIS FRANCIS GARGALLO.

LOVE,

OR

THE GENIUS OF CREATION.

See Venus' offspring veil'd in human form,
Promethean start from sculptor's chisel warm,
Creation's Genius, Love, 'neath whose control
Stars, planets, systems animated roll:
Of magic mould his graceful limbs assume
The burst of youth yet tinged with boyhood's bloom.
On lion's spoil upon his left reclined,
He holds the fluttering emblem of the mind;
Between his fingers to life's fountain prest,
Whose soft pulsation lulls his gentle rest.

Pure from that Orient fount all motion springs,
Conveyed to nature on those insect-wings,
That soon expanding o'er the realms of air,
Creative warmth to distant worlds shall bear.

So sculpture seized, embodied in that stone
The dream of Hellas rendered all her own.

So from the great Creator's bosom drew
The soul that worlds wide animating flew.
By Gods inspired alone could sculptor trace
That mould of beauty and those lines of grace.
Else vainly had the lab'ring chisel wrought,
Nor quickened marble by the fire of thought.
What voice beside would sluggish stone obey,
To melt and rival animated clay?
Could all the efforts of industrious art
Immortal beauty to those limbs impart?
That ne'er before in symmetry combin'd,
Fill'd up the trace that Nature but design'd:
Stole from earth's fairest forms their life and grace,
Then shaped a being of celestial race.
While from that statue in a glance of fire,
The sculptor's soul darts radiant and entire.
Love! is't to thee deluded mortals cling?
Their hopes dependent on thy fluttering wing.
Ah! me, had but that plumage never grown,
And chain'd to earth hadst thou been all our own,
What were to heaven, and virtue left, if here
Were thy extatic thrill of bliss sincere?
But ah! the chord of joy alone replies
To tune Love's wings beat as he parting flies;

For only when abandoned to our woe,
When left for ever, Love indeed we know.
Since bliss, that vision of an airy spell,
Can but in dreams of hope or mem'ry dwell.
  Approach the statue and instinctive feel
Thine inward awe a present god reveal.
For surely beauty of ideal birth
Was traced in heav'n ere moulded upon earth,
Since to the heart it corresponding rings,
Like lyres that vibrate through accordant strings.
How fair those rounded limbs! what tresses deck
His rising temples, shade his swelling neck.
Light o'er his lips a quiv'ring smile there steals,
That heart attuned to godlike joy reveals.
Transparent beams his airy form, nor slow
Along those veins pure floods of passion flow.
If it be marble, then creative grown
By art was life imparted to that stone.
  By night 'neath Dian's silv'ry beams surveyed,
Were that fair form on flowery terrace laid,
Might am'rous nymph not idly deem that then
The mould of gods had been assumed by men.
How softly thrown he all abandoned lies!
How proud with nature here her rival vies!

While round the light as though enamour'd plays,
New lustre added to its dazzling rays.
All, all so fair, harmonious, and sublime,
That ev'n suspended seems the flight of time;
The while is nature plunged in deep repose,
Nor sign of motion, nor existence shows;
Until again those insect-wings shall soar
To breathless worlds imparting life once more.

But lo! that calm profound a god declares,
Whose mind for action fixed by fate prepares,
O'erjoyed that soon shall mingling with his own,
Another soul enlivening worlds have flown.
For purer spirits all attractive find
Their bliss imperfect till they blend combined.
Such union in that insect and that boy,
As can but pure intelligence enjoy;
Such thrill of passion felt, yet ne'er exprest,
Till in that marble, fired the sculptor's breast.

But captive warring with this mould of clay,
His spirit panted for the climes of day;
Poised upon parting wings he left behind
This last bright image of his lofty mind.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

I

Up from his frantic revel call'd,
Behold Belshazzar grasp his sword;
For shouts of vengeance have forestall'd
His surfeit at the brutal board.

Ere the impious cup is quaff'd,
Down is dash'd the maddening draught:
The fatal hand appears.
Terror shrieks, where folly laughed;
Guilt the tyrant's bosom sears.

II.

Behold him starting from his feast,
"Clad in curses," crowned with shame.
The din of drunkenness has ceas'd,
Drown'd in shouts that death proclaim.

III.

For slaves, whose lying tongues seem giv'n
To laud their tyrant up to heav'n,
The chorus of the regal choir,
Arous'd, with one fell crash, have riv'n
The strings that tun'd their abject lyre.
'Tis strung again: from bondage freed,
Execrations loud succeed
To lays by adulation whin'd.
Up! ye courtiers, shout, impede
The clamours of mankind.

IV.

Aloud, from dungeons buried deep
Below the level of the main,
Where tortur'd slaves have ceas'd to weep,
Where death is ev'n implored in vain,
Bursts abroad a piercing cry,
That scales the battlements on high.
Heav'n, that is deaf to pompous vows,
By trembling tyrants sworn,
Unbought to hear the captive bows,
And list to lips that mourn.

V.

Before my eyes, aloft in air,
Forms aërial glide along;
Embattled hosts their charge prepare,
Uniting reels the clashing throng.

Low in the dust Assyria's tribute thrones,
Her trampled crowns and shatter'd sceptres lie
His country's music are the tyrant's groans;
The brutal fiend, that never spar'd, must die.

Blood flows till rolls Euphrates red,
And stains afar the troubled main:
Till Death, encumber'd by the dead,
Has struck his dart into the plain.

VI.

Say then, deluded lord of earth,
Deem'd ye the day should not have birth,
When melted by Judea's cries,
Should Vengeance leave her native skies?
Hear ye not her steeds afar
Neigh beneath their thundering car?
What! though thy minions, deck'd in pride,
Uniting menace side by side;
Insulted, see them fall!

Their yoke is broken, men deride
Their abject cries that "mercy" call.
Their cries, who never heard the prayer
Of melting anguish flow:
So well their trumpets rent the air,
And drown'd the voice of woe.

VII.

She comes! like pestilential star,
That sweeps athwart the trembling air:
The clouds in terror flame afar;
Night shrinking rushes from her glare.

She comes! before her stands the slave;
The writhing tyrant flies;
The bondsman bursts his living grave;
The ruthless despot dies.

VIII.

Hide now, Belshazzar, rise and hide
Stains that with human blood are dyed:
Or intercept the captive's prayer;
Or drown the groanings of despair;
Or bribe with all thy guilty gold,
For which the innocent were sold,
Yet Vengeance will not spare.

IX.

She comes! her serpent-locks unbound;
She plants her foot; blood stains the ground,
While shake the shrinking hills around.

Where is the fiery despot now?
Where, where have fled his courtly throng?
Low sweeps the dust his bloody brow,
Dragg'd at her chariot-wheels along.

To madness urg'd, she goads her steeds,
Wing'd by Terror and Dismay:
A nation shouts, Belshazzar bleeds;
'Tis the feast of blood to-day.

THE

DYING RAFFAELE

TO

HIS MISTRESS.

TO THERESA.

I.

THERESA! clasp'd in thy embrace,
Let all my soul exhale away:
Thy breast be my abiding place:
'Tis death to part, though death to stay.

II.

Theresa! in thy arms consum'd;
How feverish glows my hectic smile!
I feel that Love has but illum'd
His torch to light my funeral pile.

III.

Ah me! that nature should ally
Such passion to this feeble frame:
Should give the nobler part, deny
The clay attemper'd to its flame.

IV.

Theresa! yet one other kiss,
Though Death lie on thy lips conceal'd.
Why should I live, if all the bliss
Of life be but by death reveal'd.

V.

Yet never, never may'st thou know
The price our wild embraces cost:
I, on thy love, my life bestow,
Nor ev'n with life my love exhaust.

Note.—The reader must bear in mind that Raffaele died of consumption, occasioned by violent attachment to his mistress.

THE

FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

OF

THE MESSIAH.

THE

FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

OF

THE MESSIAH.

I.

Not in the thunders of his ire,
That loud o'er Sinai roll'd;
Not forth from lips exhaling fire,
Was Jesu's name foretold.

An angel left the choirs of heav'n,
And whisper'd in a virgin's ear,
The voice of mercy, man forgiv'n;
An Infant-God that should appear.

II.

He comes! yet not in blasting light,
Clad in the mantle of his might;
Not to create, nor to destroy.

Not with the glowing hand that hurl'd
Through pathless space his radiant world;
And o'er it spread the purple sky,
A star-bespangled canopy;
At nature's natal hour of joy.
Not with the voice that spoke—and light
Started from the womb of night.

He comes! but in a happier hour,
With hand outstretch'd to save.
Almighty, but confines his power
To triumph o'er the grave.

III.

Bow lowly down, proud Carmel bow
The palms that crown thy verdant brow,
Let Lebanon his head recline,
Till sweeps the dust the lofty pine.
Let Zion's rocks, and Jordan's waves;
Their whisp'ring vales, and echoing caves,
The joyful name repeat.
He comes! yet upon healing wing
To tear from vanquish'd Death his sting;
Let earth her Saviour greet.

IV.

So soft the music of his name,
Its sound the deaf shall hear;
The dumb with op'ning lips proclaim
The God who shall appear.

V.

But, lo! prophetic vision sees,
Adown the dark abyss of time,
A snowy steed, that on the breeze,
Comes sweeping in its course sublime.

Lo! with the lightnings of his eyes,
Its rider blasts the shrinking skies;
While heav'n's whole armies, as he flies,
His flaming path pursue.

VI.

But hark! another name is giv'n
To him that rides the winds of heav'n.
No more a Saviour he appears;
As King of Kings his front he rears.
An angel standing in the sun,
Proclaims the feast of wrath begun;
While nature shudders as she hears,
And feels her force undone.

VII.

He comes! it is the vintage-hour;
The press prepare: a rising flood
Flows crimson from the vine-clad bower:
But lo! it rolls in streams of blood.

And who the reaper? He that trod
Too light to bruise a broken reed;
Comes in his burning ire—a God,
His foes to trample 'neath his steed.

THE END.

NORMAN AND SKEEN, PRINTERS, MAIDEN LANE, COVENT GARDEN.